

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEHRAN 05741 141159Z

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ACTION VO-03

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R 141020Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3462

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CVIS, IR

SUBJ: PROMOTION OF TRAVEL ON AMERICAN CARRIERS

REF: STATE 156486

1. PROCEDURE PROPOSED TEHRAN OM 7/24/73 IMMEDIATELY SUSPENDED PER PARA (3) REFTEL. ONLY ONE TOURSGROUP PREVIOUSLY ACCOMMODATED IN-ASMUCH AS "BOULDER-HIGHDIVER" MADE PERSONAL APPEARANCE ALL APPLICANTS MANDATORY BEGINING 7/26/73.

2. CONTRARY IMPRESSION CONVEYED PARASHAKQL & (2) REFTEL, WAIVERHN PERSONAL APPEARANCE IS IN FACT DETERMINED BY CONSULAR OFFICER ON CASE-BY-CASE BASIS, WITH TRAVEL AGENTS INVITED MERELY TYPE APPLI-PYIONS AND DELIVER THEM TO CONSULAR SECTION FOR DECISION.

3. WHILE TEHRAN REMAINS "HIGH-RISK" AREA AS STATED PARAS (3) & (4) REFTEL, POST DESIRED ATTEMPT DEFINE LOW-RISK CATEGORY THROUGH EXPER-IMENTAL PROCEDURE OUTLINED IN OM. PAN AM WAS CHOSEN FOR THIS PRO-CEURE BECAUSE IT ATTRACTS MORE AFFLUENT TRAVELLERS AMONG IRANIAN TOURISTS AND FACT THAT IS IS AMERICAN CARRIER IS FORTUNATE COIN-CIDENCE WHICH DOVETAILS WITH CA-4841. IRANIAN TRAVELLERS ON IRANAIR ARE ROUTINELY AFFORDED 40 PERCENT DISCOUNT FOR TRAVEL TO EUROPE CONNECTING TO OTHER CARRIERS, AND 50 PERCENT DISCOUNT ON FREQUENT US CHARTERS. THUS, IRANIAN PASSENGERS MUST PAY HIGH PREMIUM TO TRAVEL PAN AM. SEVERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH PAN AM OFFICIALS TEHRAN DISCLOSED TOUR PASSENGERS ARE MAINLY THOSE WHO WISH TRAVEL FIRST CLASS, HAVE TRAVELLED EXTENSIVELY BEFORE, AND ARE PROMINENT AND WELL ESTABLISHED HERE. DISCUSSIONS ALSO REVEALED SUCH PASSENGERS

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PAGE 02 TEHRAN 05741 141159Z

IN MANY CASES HAVE FOREGONE TRAVEL US SINCE THEY RELUCTANT LINE UP

WITH HORDEMSOF OTHER APPLICANTS WHICH HAVE DESCENDED ON UNDERMANNED TEHRAN CONSULAR SECTION SINCE MAY 1973. THIS DESPITE STRENUOUS EFFORTS VISA OFFICERS TO MAKE NIV INTERVIEW A MEMORABLY PLEASANT AND REWARDING EXPERIENCE.

4. POST WISHES TO EMPHASIZE THAT PROCEDURE PROPOSED WOULD BE EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTINGENT ON HIGH RETURN RATE USING STRINGENT VERIFICATION PROCEDURE. FORTUNATE COINCIDENCE THAT PAN AM, WHICH IS SINGLE AMERICAN CARRIER SERVING TEHRAN, CHARGES WHAT AMOUNT IN TEHRAN TO PREMIUM PRICES FOR TOURISTS, WOULD ALLOW CONSULAR OFFICERS AT ONCE TO ATTEMPT IDENTIFY LOW-RISK FISH IN HIGH-RISK SEA AND AT SAME TIME PROMOTE US TRAVEL FROM IRAN VIA SERIOUSLY DIS-CRIMINATED-AGAINST AMERICAN CARRIER.

5. AS NOTED TEHRAN OM, IF EXPERIMENT SUCCEEDS, EMBASSY PLANS GRADUALLY EXPAND PRIVILEGE OF PERSONAL APPEARANCE AQIVER TO WIDER LOW-RISK GROUP.

6. DEPT REQUESTED RECONSIDER INSTRUCTION REFTTEL IN LIGHT OF CLARIFICATION PROVIDED BY THIS CABLE.
HECK

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